

# Controlled Calving Season

A controlled calving season is a 60–90 day period when all calves are born. It allows improved nutrient, health, and marketing management due to animal similarity all year.

## Winter Calving – calves born late December to early March

- Cows bred mid March to mid May; calves weaned September- early October

### Advantages

- Calves older at traditional time of sale
- Older, bigger bulls to sell for purebred operations
- Avoids breeding during hottest part of year
- Little problem with mud at calving

### Disadvantages

- Calving in coldest part of the year – longer time from calving to pasture
- High cow costs due to more need for stored feed
- Cows take longer to recycle
- Calves grazed during summer forage slump
- Commercial calves marketed when prices are low

## Spring Calving – calves born March to May - 65-75% of herds in Virginia

- Cows bred in June and July; calves weaned from October to December

### Advantages

- Favorable weather for calving
- Lactating cows fed primarily on pasture - costs lower (dry cows over winter)
- Cows cycle back quickly after calving
- Calves marketed before winter begins

### Disadvantages

- Can be muddy at calving
- Calves grazed through the summer forage slump
- Cows bred during hottest part of the year
- Calves sold when prices are low

## Fall Calving – calves born September to early November – 20-30% of herds

- Cows bred in December - January; calves weaned late spring - early summer

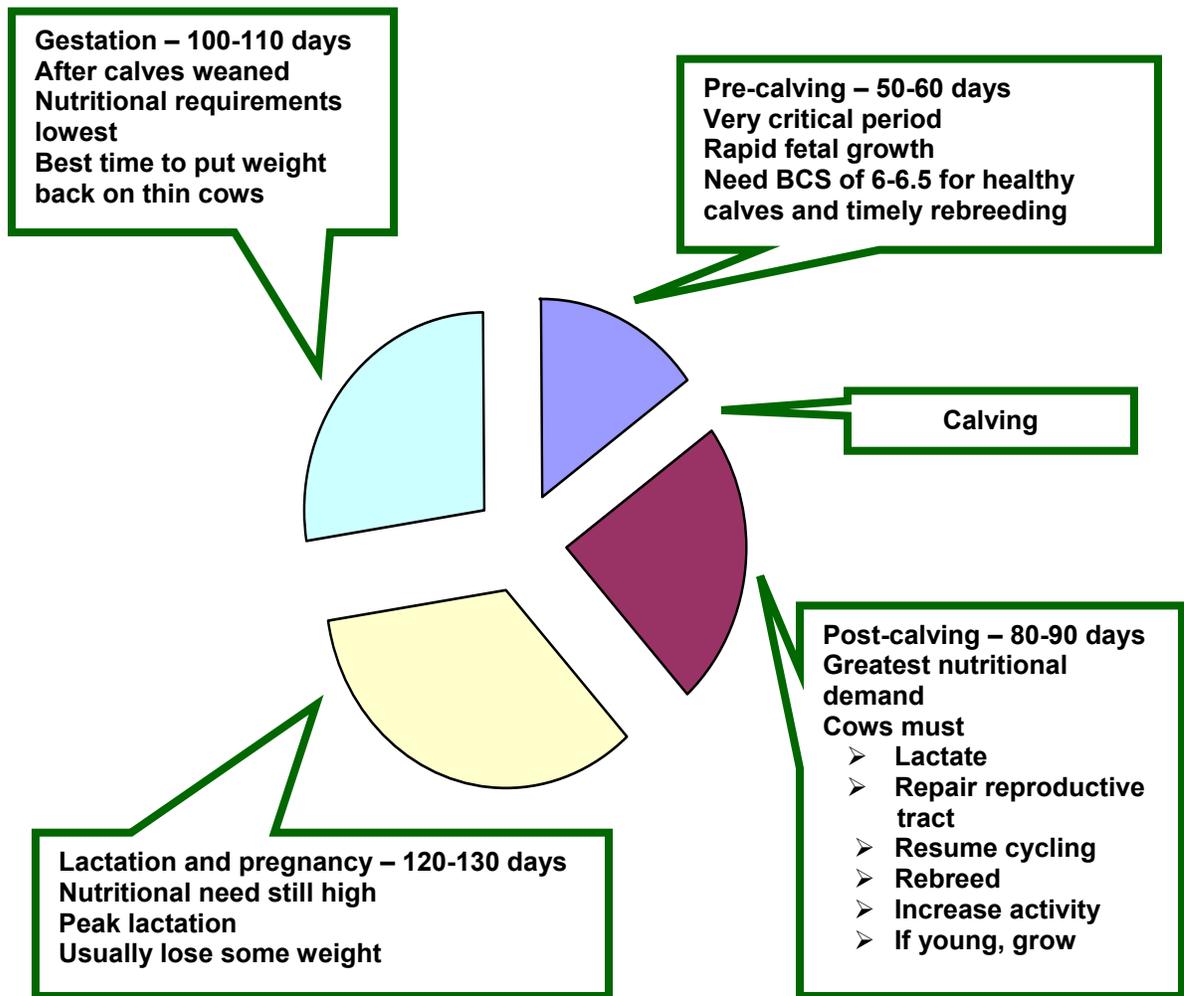
### Advantages

- Weather favorable for calving
- Cows usually dry during summer forage slump
- Cows calve in excellent body condition
- Cows cycle back quickly after calving
- Avoid breeding during hottest part of the year
- Calves marketed during year's highest prices

### Disadvantages

- Lactating cows and calves fed during winter – cow costs are increased
- Calf health may suffer in western Virginia
- Breeding during shortest days of the year
- If weaned early spring, calf weight may be light
- Need to keep calves longer to make up for winter

## Beef Cow Production Cycle



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